उपसभापति : ठीक है।

***मौलाना ओबैदुल्ला खान आज़मी** : मैडम, लिखकर देने के लिए कल तक का टाइम दे रही हैं?

उपसभापति : कल तो होली डे है, परसों तक का टाइम दे रही हूं।

***मौलाना ओबैदुल्ला खान आज़मी** : थैंक्यू मैडम।

उपसभापति : आप आराम से अपने हार्ड डिस्क में से निकालकर सॉफ्ट डिस्क डालकर हमें भेज दें।

We have only one business left. Clarifications on the NPT. Is it okay?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE : We can forego it.

VALEDICTORY REMARKS

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : All right. Before I adjourn the House, I want to make some concluding remarks. The session started on 23rd February, 2000. We have had 38 sittings. We have worked for 186 hours. We had 146 reports of various Parliamentary Committees. There was a detailed discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. About thirty-three Members took part in it. During the session, we have passed thirteen Government Bills and returned eight Bills. So, congratulations to the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. He should thank the House. We have discussed the working of three Ministries, Agriculture, Health and Family Welfare and Defence. There were eleven statements by the Prime Minister and other Ministers. We had seven Calling Attention Motions in this session. I think, this is a record for any session in recent years. We are very happy about it. We had six Short Duration Discussions on different subjects which were of very great importance to the nation. There were eighty-five plus thirty-one Special Mentions -- half of which I had made on your behalf - in the House on matters of public importance. We had one reference made on the occasion of the International Women's Day for which I am thankful to all of you for having stopped your agitiation; and allowed the women's voice to be heard. I must put it on record that in spite of everybody co-operating, the Women's Reservation Bill has not come. We want the Bill to come to the Rajya Sabha because we want to be the first to pass this Bill.

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* Translitration of the Speech in Persian Script is available in the Hindi version of the debate.

8.00 P.M

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): I cannot do it.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You can withdraw it from the Lok Sabha; and introduce it in the Rajya Sabha.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: It is very difficult.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is not applicable to the Rajya Sabha. So, we will pass it quickly. It is applicable to the Lok Sabha. That is why the Lok Sabha Members are worried that the finger which presses the button may be cut. That is the reason why the Bill is not getting passed.

During the session, we have also adopted one Government Resolution, namely, the Railway Convention Committee's Report. During the session, sixty-eight newly-elected Members took oath/affirmation and took their seats in the House;and made valuable contributions. I think, all of them had their maiden speeches.

During the session, 740 Starred Questions; and 5,636 Unstarred Questions were admitted.

The House will also miss three Members from Kerala. They are Shri E. Balanandan, Shri Vayalar Ravi and Shri M.P.A. Samadani who are due to retire on lst July, 2000 on completion of their terms of office. I once again wish them good health, happiness and success in life and I do hope that they will come back again to this House. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, the leaders of various parties and groups and all the hon. Members for the kind cooperation extended by them in conducting the proceedings of the House. I do so on behalf of the hon. Chairman, all the Members on the panel of Vice-Chairmen and on my own behalf. I also take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat, the Secretary-General and his staff, the people working at the Table Office and Notice Office, the Watch and Ward people, the Press and everybody who is behind the scene, working late in the night when we go away, for their hard work and cooperation. I also have one complaint that the Parliamentary Affairs Minister never gave us a dinner, and he belongs to this House!

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: Yesterday, I planned it and you adjourned before that.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is having a step-fatherly or a step-brotherly behaviour to his own House.

Now, Dr. Manmohan Singh.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Madam, this happens to be the Budget Session of Parliament in which the Rajya Sabha has, probably, not as important a role as the Lok Sabha. But we have the satisfaction that we have fully cooperated in passing all the essential financial business that came to this House well in time so that on that count, the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs should have no complaint. I also draw some satisfaction from the fact that in respect of all the essential legislations that the Government thought ought to be passed in this Session, we cooperated in their passage well in time and I think that augurs well for the success of our democracy. Particularly, with reference to the Bills relating to information technology and semi-conductors, I think we sent out a right message to the rest of the world that India is now well equipped to handle all the problems and challenges and opportunities that arise, as we move into this information and knowledge-intensive world.

Madam, I also draw satisfaction from the fact that we were able to discuss in the Rajya Sabha the Demands for Grants of three Ministries. I regret that shortage of time did not enable us to discuss the Demands for Grants of the External Affairs Ministry. I do hope that we will have an opportunity to discuss the affairs of the Ministry of External Affairs on some pretext or the other in the next Session of Parliament.

It is also my regret that for the second time in a row, we did not have the privilege of the hon. Prime Minister replying to the debate on the Address of the President. But I do understand the reasons which prevented the hon. Prime Minister from coming to this House.

Madam, in conclusion, I would like to thank the hon. Chairman, you, your colleagues,other Presiding Officers and staff of the Rajya Sabha for the guidance and all the help and cooperation that we received from the Secretary-General and his staff. Thank you very much.

THE LEADER OF THE HOUSE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): Madam, in the schedule of parliamentary activity...

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Madam, I have forgotten to mention the contribution to our deliberations that was made by my esteemed friend, Shri Jaswant Singhji, the hon. Leader of the House; his unfailing courtesy, understanding of our points of view, was of immense assistance to us. That also applies to his colleague, the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, in making the affairs of this House smooth and speedy.

SHRI JASWANT SINGH: Madam, as I was saying, in the schedule of parliamentary activity that we have, this is the longest Session. It is, in time, long. Today also, Madam, the time has stretched beyond 8 o'clock. I am mindful of the sense of the House. I shall, therefore, not take too long But I must place on record, in unreserved terms, our appreciation without which the achievement of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs would not have been possible, that from the Leader of the Opposition, his other distinguished and senior colleagues, we have always received cooperation, assistance, advice and guidance; and as is normal in a Parliamentary Democracy, when passions were aroused, when anger invaded the House, well, expression was given to it. But along with giving expression to the views that they hold, unfailingly, on every occasion, it required, that the machine of Parliamentary Democracy does not come to a stand still; unfailingly, always from the Leader of the Opposition and from his other distinguished colleagues, and indeed, from the leaders of other parties, we have received complete and total cooperation, without which, of course, it is not possible to function as a Parliament, because the essence of Parliamentary Democracy is that out of discord, out of differences, to be able to have accord, find a way and move in the direction in which the country must move. Madam, you have recorded all that we have done, the Leader of the Opposition has done, and has given voice to it. It is not necessary for me to repeat all the achievements of the House. The House has indeed the distinction of making great improvements on past precedents. It is not perfect. We need to do better, and no doubt, in the coming months, and in the coming Session, we will do better. But you, Madam, the Leader of the Opposition, the leaders of all political parties, the Secretariat, the Secretary-General, the Staff, and all those who are silently assisting us behind the scene, as you have put it in your words, without which it would not have been possible, and my gratitude to the ever attentive and watchful press galleries, and till we meet, we remain very deeply grateful to you and to the Chairman. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Now, before we adjourn *sine die* and before we have our Vande Mataram, I must wish you all a very happy inter Session till we meet again. My good wishes for all the festivals which might be there during this period and health and happiness to all of you. Now, we will have the National Song, Vande Mataram.

[The National Song (Vande Mataram) was then played]

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, I adjourn the House *sine die*.

The House then adjourned *sine die* at nine minutes past eight of the clock.